Lovely Strange Dark

ITOMEGURI NO SOBYOU
"A CANVAS OF SPUN YARN"
BY AOI AKI
CHAPTER 6

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chapter
six

"SHE MUST HAVE REALLY LOVED EMBROIDERY."
"JUST LIKE YOU."
"I'M NOTHING LIKE YOU."
NUIKO
...
!
GRANDPA.

...
YOU'RE NOT MAKING MUCH PROGRESS, ARE YOU?
WHAT?!
THEY'RE GRANDMA'S—
YOU'RE TOO FICKLE WHEN IT COMES TO NEEDLEWORK
I WISH SHE HADN'T LEFT HER SCRAPS TO YOU
...
YOU'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE.
IF YOUR HEART'S NOT IN IT, YOU'LL END UP WITH SOMETHING SUBPAR

...
GRANDMA TREASURED EVERY ONE OF THEM.
HOW COULD HE CALL THEM SCRAPS?
WHY IS IT NOT WORKING OUT?
I JUST WANTED TO HAVE A GOOD TIME...
DOING SOMETHING I LOVE

ACTUALLY...
FAVORITE COLOR IS PURPLE...
THEN WHY DO YOU USE RED?
COLORED THREAD IS EXPENSIVE*...
BESIDES... PURPLE IS THE COLOR OF SORROW
SUCH A FOREBODING COLOR HAS NO PLACE ON AN APRON

*RED THREAD WAS MORE COMMON.

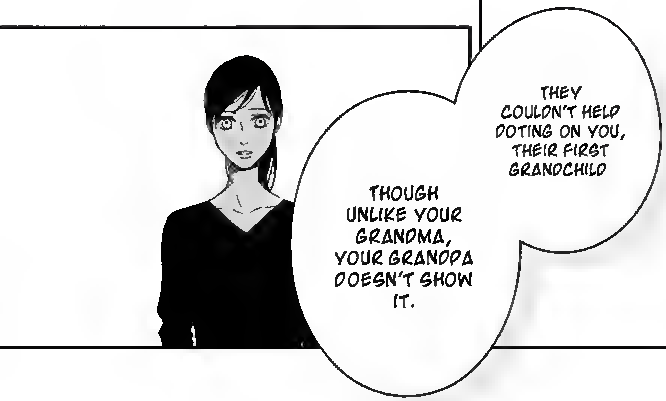
GRANDMAMA,
I'M SORRY I TOOK SO LONG
I STITCHED PLENTY OF PURPLE FLOWERS FOR YOU.
I MADE A MATCHING SCARF FOR MYSELF

With the passage of time,
threads that were once white had gained some colors.
WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE OFF MOURNING, I WILL BE WEARING IT STILL
AFTER ALL, PURPLE IS MY FAVORITE COLOR, TOO.
Here's hoping there will be more colors to come.
so one may express one's love more freely.

I CAN'T DO IT...
IT'S NOT GOING ANY-WHERE
AH, THAT ONE MEANS...
MITSUKO...
HI THERE, NUI.
HI.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I'M EXPECTING ANY DAY NOW,
SO I THOUGHT I'D COME BY AND LEARN HOW TO STITCH SEMORI.
SEMORI?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER, NUIKO?

I'M SURE YOU'VE SEEN IT ON THE BACKS OF YOUR BABY CLOTHES
OH
THAT
SO THAT'S WHAT IT'S CALLED
IT'S A TRADITIONAL EMBROIDERY TO PROTECT CHILDREN
BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, YOUR GRANDPA COLLECTED ALL THE DESIGNS HE COULD FIND
HE AND YOUR GRANDMA HAD A HARD TIME PICKING OUT THE RIGHT ONE FOR YOU
GRANDPA DID?
THEY LET ME DO THE STITCHING MYSELF
NOT YOUR SHICHI-GO-SAN* KIMONO, THOUGH THAT WAS ALL THEM

*A RITE OF PASSAGE AND FESTIVAL DAY CELEBRATED ON NOVEMBER 15 FOR GIRLS AGED THREE (SAN) AND SEVEN (SHICHI), AND FOR BOYS AGED THREE AND FIVE (GO)


THEY COULDN'T HELP DOTING ON YOU, THEIR FIRST GRANDCHILD
THOUGH UNLIKE YOUR GRANDMA, YOUR GRANDPA DOESN'T SHOW IT.

GRANDPA.
YES
WHAT IS IT?
DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
THESE ARE ALL THE STITCHES I COPIED FROM GRANDMA'S COLLECTION.

I DO FEEL BAD, THOUGH, FOR SLACKING OFF WITH MY ASSIGNMENT...
BECAUSE I HAVE TOO MANY THINGS GOING ON IN MY HEAD
BUT EVER SINCE I STARTED COPYING DESIGNS AND TECHNIQUES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES,
I'VE GOTTEN MORE AND MORE EXCITED TO STITCH THE JAPANESE WAY
YOU PROBABLY THINK IT'S ALL POINTLESS
SO PLEASE, GRANDPA
BUT I PROMISE I'LL GET BACK TO IT,
AND THIS TIME I'LL DO A PROPER JOB OF IT
GIVE ME SOME TIME UNTIL THEN

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU GET YOUR WILLFULNESS FROM?
NUIKO,
I THINK IT'S GOOD THAT YOU'RE LEARNING ON TOP OF PRODUCING SOMETHING.
HOWEVER, I STILL WANT YOU TO DEDICATE YOURSELF TO JAPANESE EMBROIDERY.
GRANDPA...
BUT IN THE END SHE NEVER HAD ENOUGH TIME FOR STITCHING THE THINGS SHE WANTED
AT MY AGE, I CAN SAFELY SAY THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH TIME FOR ANYTHING.
SHE HAD A GIFT WITH HER HANDS, YOUR GRANDMOTHER

NUIKO,
MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL HAVE REGRETS,
JUST AS SHE DID.
...
BUT...
GRANDMA ALWAYS LOOKED LIKED SHE HAD A GREAT TIME
IF I COULD BE LIKE THAT,
I'M SURE I WON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS

YOU TWO
ARE SO MUCH ALIKE
DON'T DO THINGS BY HALVES
I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT
OK.
THANK YOU, GRANDPA
I'M GLAD WE TALKED IT OUT

You'd think you know someone inside out because you see them every day.
But that wasn't the case at all. I hardly knew my own grandpa.
It seems obvious now,
but communication is key to our relationships.
NUIKO
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
I HAD SOMETHING TO DO
GOING HOME?
HANG ON I'LL BE A MINUTE
WE HAVEN'T WALKED HOME TOGETHER IN AGES
YOU SEEM TO BE BUSY

CAREER OPTIONS?
YEAH.
RIGHT.
YOU HAVE YOUR BALLET, TOO.
...
NU—
AKARI,
WHATEVER YOU DO,
I HAVE YOUR BACK.

I KNOW..
THERE'S SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU
AND I JUST NOW REALIZED YOU CAN'T KEEP IT BOTTLED UP
HUH?
SO...
NO MATTER WHAT IT IS,
I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU

I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT
NUIKO...
...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME ABOUT IT,
THOUGH YOU'LL PROBABLY FEEL BETTER IF YOU DO
NUIKO...

.. I...
WAS THIS CLOSE TO QUITTING BALLET FOR GOOD
I EVEN TOOK IT OUT ON YOU.
I COULDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE YOU KNEW WHAT YOU WANTED.
AKARI...
I WASN'T ABLE TO LET GO
STILL...
I GOT A HAIRCUT TO PREPARE MYSELF MENTALLY.

BUT...
I'VE HAD IT WITH MOPING AROUND
...
I'M GOING TO APPLY FOR A SPOT IN BALLET SCHOOLS IN RUSSIA AND HUNGARY.
IF I GET IN, I'LL LEAVE IN THE SUMMER.
YOU'RE GOING ABROAD
AH!
WHAT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL?

I HAVEN'T SHOT MY AUDITION YET—PLANNING TO TODAY.
I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU AFTER
IT'S A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM, SO IF I'M IN, I'LL DROP OUT OF SCHOOL
I'M SORRY, NUIKO
YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT ME, RIGHT?
I...
LOVE BALLET.
I WON'T BE SECOND-GUESSING MYSELF ANYMORE.

...
GO FOR IT!
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT.
YEAH, THANK YOU

GOOD LUCK, AKARI
I'LL DO MY BEST, TOO.
You're probably going to regret your choices some day.
But it's better than giving up now by miles.
Isn't that right, Grandma?
YES
READY, AKARI?
OK, WE'RE ALL SET HERE.

THIS IS ONLY A VIDEO AUDITION,
SO DANCE THE WAY YOUR HEART TELLS YOU TO
I WILL

YOU CAN START RECORDING.